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THE HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR WHO BUILT COMMODORE p112

➔ When Jack Tramiel took over Atari, he axed the high-end 800 XL models in favour of redesigned versions of the lower-end machines

machine to have built-in MIDI In and Out ports, it became a favourite among musicians.

Even so, Tramiel's tough reputation preceded him. Retailers were reluctant to do deals, and there were battles with software companies (Lucasfilm managed to get out of a pre-arranged partnership with Atari, with an unimpressed Steve Arnold, who headed the company's Games Group, comparing Tramiel to Jabba the Hutt). Tramiel also delighted in any problems Commodore was having and, by the late 1980s, it appeared Atari had turned itself around and was on top.
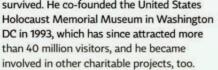
MEGA SUCCESS

The ST saved Atari. It led to versions with built-in floppy drives and a business model called the Mega. There was an STE version adding more colours and stereo sound. Tramiel would fly to Germany for trade shows in order to promote these machines and he would often stay near Hanover.

At that point, however, Tramiel looked to become less hands-on, and son Sam became president and CEO, seeing Atari through the less-than-successful era of the handheld Lynx and 64-bit console, the Jaguar. Tramiel, meanwhile, showed his ongoing desire to ensure the memory of those terrible war years

survived. He co-founded the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC in 1993, which has since attracted more than 40 million visitors, and he became involved in other charitable projects, too.

He also returned to Atari for a short spell in 1995 when Sam suffered a heart attack, before selling the company to Jugi Tandon Storage in 1996, becoming a board member of the renamed JTS Corporation and moving to Monte Sereno in California to retire. This brought an end to his corporate life, and his attention moved back to the personal. In this, he showed a softer side

and he became ever more determined to keep the memories of the Holocaust alive.

Indeed, he was forever indebted not just to those who helped him – in 2003, he unveiled a plaque at the museum inscribed: "To Vernon W Tott, My Liberator and Hero" – but to those who had been killed. He wanted to keep their memories alive as best he could. As such, when he died of heart failure, aged 83, in 2012, he did so having left a legacy in more ways than one, ensuring his journey from the concentration camp to a captain of the computer industry will never be forgotten. ▣
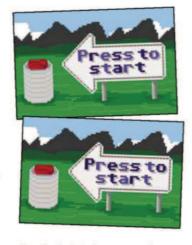
● DOWNLOAD INTEL DRIVERS FOR RETRO SCALING SUPPORT

Intel's newly released Ice Lake 10th-gen Core mobile processors make playing retro games on a PC a far crisper experience if you're lucky enough to have the latest GPU – so long as you download the beta drivers, anyway.

The drivers offer pure integer scaling, which scales up existing pixels by a whole number multiplier, as well as nearest neighbour interpolation to fill in the missing colour values of upscaled images so that the result is less blurry on a modern screen.

Intel says it will also make future indie titles look better.

"We're listening to our community. You wanted a way to experience pixel-art games at their best so we created Retro Scaling. Enhance the latest indie releases and timeless classics so

they look their best on modern HD displays," says the firm.

Get hold of the drivers by visiting tinyurl.com/382retro1.

● SOUND OFF WITH AN AMSTRAD CPC

If you'd like better audio capabilities from an Amstrad CPC 464, 664 or 6128, then you ought to sound out this wonderful project by Michael

Wessel. He's created a hardware expansion card called LambdaSpeak 3 that emulates Amstrad's official SSA-1 speech synthesiser and stereo amplifier. What's more, it also offers four-channel PCM sample playback so that the CPC can be used with a drum machine sequencer program.

Fitted with an Epson S1V30120 TTS chip running DECtalk 5, it's capable of natural sounding speech and can control an MP3 player or MIDI module thanks to its UART interface. Indeed, version 53 of the firmware was recently released, offering a full duplex MIDI in/out real-time mode.

"The main excitement and motivation for the project came from being able to bring DECtalk to the CPC – the most versatile and natural sounding

text-to-speech engine that exists 'on a chip'," Wessel tells us.

"In the 80s, DECtalk hardware synthesisers were out of the price range for the hobbyist and cost thousands of dollars."

You can get the full lowdown on the project, complete with information about its components and links to files, by going to tinyurl.com/382retro2. Wessel says he is also offering fully assembled versions for sale, costing from £90 depending on the required options, so feel free to approach him via the site.